



Apply Now for Producers First Technical Assistance

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MADISON – Many food producers have thought about boosting sales by increasing their capacity and improving their efficiency but did not have the tools to make the plan a reality. That's why the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is encouraging producers to take advantage of Producers First funding to obtain individualized technical assistance to grow their operations.

Producers First provides funding to help producers choose a technical assistance provider with the experience and expertise needed for their unique situation. Examples of technical assistance include: accounting, business planning, facility design, financial organization, food safety, grant writing, label design, legal services, market development, packaging development and whole farm planning.

The program provides up to \$3,000 for a consultant to provide the needed assistance for the individual operation. Producers must make a matching payment of at least 10%. DATCP provides a database of possible consultants as a reference if desired.

From \$61,085 of funds distributed since 2010 for Producers First technical assistance, producers have reported creating 26 jobs and retaining 55 positions. These participants also reported \$438,901 of increased sales and \$601,798 in new investments tied to their work with consultants through this program.

If interested in obtaining Producers First assistance, complete a brief questionnaire at http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy_Wisconsin/Producers_First by September 15. Questions include type of food produced, revenue generated in the last three years, years in production, market used and type of assistance needed.

Producers who meet minimum qualifications for the program in the questionnaire will then be asked to submit a full application. Preference will be given to food producers selling a majority of their products through local markets.

For questions or more information, contact Keefe Keeley at datcpproducersfirst@wisconsin.gov or 608-224-5095. You can also connect with DATCP on Twitter at twitter.com/widatcp or Facebook at facebook.com/widatcp.

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